

**Remarks**

Claims 1-9 and 17-19 were pending in the present application, to which new claim 20 has been added. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims define allowable subject matter.

The Examiner is thanked for indicating claims 5 and 7-9 to be allowable.

Claims 1-4 and 17-19 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Myer et al. (USP 5,643,003). Claim 6 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Myer et al. (USP 5,643,003) in view of Sawada (USP 5,692,923). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for reasons set forth hereafter.

In the outstanding Office Action, it is conceded that Myer does not teach a deflectable latch including a beam disposed along one of the side walls of the housing of the plug. Instead, it is maintained that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to rearrange the components of Myer. It is further maintained that the particular design, namely the inclusion of a deflectable latch along one side of the side wall, is nothing more than inventor choice. Applicant strenuously disagrees that the claimed invention is such a trivial modification to the teachings of Myer.

Myer describes a connector assembly having a housing 20 and a CPA 40. A latch mechanism 30 on the housing 20 includes deflectable beams 31 having CPA grooves 32 formed in each respective beam 31. A void space 33 is provided between the beams 31 and stop projections 34 are provided on the respective beams 31. The CPA 40 includes a deflectable beam 41, flanges 42, an end section 43, an embossment 44, a stop member 45, a support section 46, an operating section 47, and embossment support 48. The CPA 40 is moved between first and second positions to permit and prevent deflection of the latch mechanism 30.

It is respectfully submitted that the suggested modification to Myer is not simply positioning the deflectable beams 31 along the side of Myer's housing 20. Instead, Myer's system would need to be modified to locate the entire latch mechanism 30 and CPA 40 along one side wall. Such a modification is more than the mere rearrangement of parts or design choice. In fact, Myer's latch assembly 30 would not fit on the side wall of the housing 20. When the

drawings of Myer are closely reviewed, it is believed clear that the height of Myer's housing 20 is not sufficient to provide room along either side wall for the latch mechanism 30, note in particular the latch posts 22.

Further, the connector assembly 10 is designed to fit in a header 50 (see Figure 5). The header 50 includes apertures 51 that are configured to receive the connector housings 20 of two connectors in a side-to-side relation. When the connector housings 20 are inserted in the header 50, there is clearly no room for a latch mechanism 30 and CPA 40 along either side wall of the housing 20. The housings 20 of adjacent connectors are positioned very close to one another and do not provide room there between or along the outer side walls for the latch mechanism 30 and CPA 40.

The background section of the present application explains that conventional connectors position the latch mechanism on the top wall, which has unduly enlarged the overall envelope of the connector device. The claimed invention represents a novel and nonobvious improvement over the state-of-the-art, not merely a rearrangement of conventional parts or a design choice over conventional arrangements. As explained above, Myer's connector does not teach a latch mechanism that is sufficiently small, even if moved, to fit along a side wall of Myers connector. Nor does Myer provide room along the sides of the connectors for the latch mechanism. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that it would not be obvious to modify Myer in the suggested manner.

With respect to the dependent claims, claim 2 defines the plug to include a cutout portion in the side wall underlying the rear end of the latch beam. Myer teaches no such structure. In Myer, the upper surface 24 of the housing 20 is entirely uniform and does not include a cutout portion anywhere, let alone underlying the rear end of the beams 31.

Claim 3 further defines the rear end of the latch beam to include a beveled interface. The beams 31 of Myer are not beveled. In the outstanding Office Action, element 46 of Myers is referenced with respect to this feature. However, element 46 of Myer represents a support section of the CPA 40. The deflecting beams 31 do not include a beveled interface that permits increased inward deflection and thus Myers does not teach or suggest the limitations of claim 3.

New claim 20 recites a TPA mated with the housing. Meyer's connector does not include a TPA and thus, claim 20 is patentable.

Sawada fails to make up for the deficiencies of Myer and is only cited in connection with claim 6. Sawada describes a connector assembly having a housing configuration that is entirely different from that of Myer in the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention. Should anything remain in order to place the present application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean Small", with a stylized flourish at the end.

---

Dean Small, Reg. No.: 34,730  
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP  
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600  
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740  
(314) 621-5070